



**House Agriculture Committee  
Chairman Bob Goodlatte  
Room 1300, Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6001  
September 20, 2006**

## **Introduction.**

My name is Jim Evans. I am a farmer of dry peas, lentils, chickpeas, wheat and barley near Genesee, Idaho. I am also the Chairman of the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council, a national organization representing producers, processors and exporters of dry peas, lentils and chickpeas across the northern tier of the United States. In the audience today is the Vice Chairman of our Council, Greg Johnson. Greg owns and operates Premier Pulses International in Minot, ND. Premier Pulses International is a large processor of peas, lentils, and chickpeas from Montana and both North & South Dakota.

Good farm policy should encourage farmers to take advantage of market opportunities and reward them for crop diversity and management practices that help the environment. Every country protects their agricultural base in some form or fashion. The recently failed WTO negotiations prove that most countries are unwilling to leave their farmers unprotected. If U.S. farmers are to compete against subsidized competition, high tariffs and phyto-sanitary barriers the following elements of the farm programs must be included in the next farm bill:

## **Title I – Commodity Programs**

- 1. Marketing Loan Program/LDP-** The Marketing Loan Program is the single most important farm program tool used on my farm. This program provides some protection when prices go in the tank and pays me nothing when prices are good. I like this program because it allows me to take advantage of market opportunities and satisfies my banker's need for some downside risk coverage. This useful program needs to continue because it allows me to include environmentally sound crops with targeted market opportunities.
- 2. Direct & Counter Cyclical Program-** I fully support the continuation of the direct and counter cyclical program payments that have sustained my farming operation and the local businesses that support my farm. Farmers do not have

3. the opportunity to set market prices, so Direct and Counter Cyclical Payments provide financial security against things which I cannot control like political decisions blocking access to lucrative markets or like Hurricane Katrina which unexpectedly increased costs of fuel and fertilizer. Direct and counter cyclical payments are a good form of Rural Development because the dollars go directly to rural enterprises that support farming and provide commerce throughout our small communities. The Farm Bill 2007 should include Direct and Counter Cyclical Payments for Pulse crops.
4. **Planting Flexibility**- The best part of the 1996 farm bill was the freedom to plant a crop based on market signals instead of base acres. Planting flexibility must be continued and expanded in the next farm bill. Chickpeas (Garbanzo beans), for example, are currently considered a vegetable crop and are not an eligible crop to be planted under farm program rules. Chickpeas are an important crop to my farm operation and I want the flexibility to grow them as an eligible farm program crop when market signals warrant.

## **Title II - Conservation Programs**

The USADPLC believes that our farm policy should reward producers for managing their soils based on long-term environmental sustainability on working lands.

1. **CRP**- The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has had many environmental benefits but the way it has been managed has been devastating to rural communities. In the next farm bill, CRP should be limited to only the most fragile lands and whole farm bids should be difficult to obtain.
2. **CSP**- In order to achieve the environmental and conservation goals of this great country, we need to fully fund the Conservation Security Program (CSP) and make it available to all producers at the same time. Sign up for the current CSP program is time consuming, complicated, and it often fails to recognize accepted conservation practices in a local area. The program should reward producers for achieving conservation goals based on systems that are economically sustainable and result in significant improvement in soil, air, and water quality. The CSP should be modified to reward producers for addressing conservation goals in their local watersheds and should encourage farmers to diversify their crop portfolios.

## **Title III - Trade**

1. **WTO**- In a perfect world there should be no agricultural subsidies, tariff barriers, phytosanitary restrictions, and currency manipulation. Unfortunately,

we do not live in a perfect world. The USADPLC supports the current WTO negotiations if the result is an agreement that puts U.S. agriculture on an **EQUAL** playing field with all other countries. WTO negotiations are on the rocks. Congress needs to write a farm bill that protects U.S. agriculture in the current trading environment. We support an extension of the 2002 Farm Bill until a fair WTO agreement is reached.

2. **Cuba-**When people ask me why U.S. farm programs are still needed to protect farmers I tell them we live in an imperfect world and sometimes my own government is working hard against me. Cuba imports over 200,000 MT of pulses each year, mostly from Canada. In the year 2000, Congress passed legislation allowing sales of agriculture commodities to Cuba. A year ago, our industry shipped over 50,000 MT of dry peas to Cuba mostly from Montana and North Dakota. This year the Administration modified the rules of payment from Cuba and dry pea sales have plummeted. Our government has cost the pea and lentil trade millions of dollars in lost sales to Cuba and other countries. We hope the next farm bill will eliminate all trade restrictions with Cuba and other countries.
3. **Food Aid-**We have a responsibility as a nation to share our abundance with those in need. We support the continuation of all food aid programs in the next farm bill. In order to address the increasing need for food aid in developing countries, P.L. 480 Title II funding should be \$2.0 billion per year. Our organization does not support cash donations in lieu of purchasing U.S. commodities within the food aid title.
4. **MAP & FMD-** The Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program have allowed our industry to penetrate new markets around the world. This program should be enhanced in the upcoming farm bill.
5. **Phyto-Sanitary Barriers-** The pea and lentil industry continues to battle phyto-sanitary barriers around the world. We have been battling fumigation requirements in India for the past two years. In March, China banned all imports of U.S. dry peas claiming excessive selenium levels in our peas. Sound science is not the basis for either of these restrictions. However, access to major markets is restricted with our harvest just around the corner. The new farm bill needs to beef up U.S. enforcement of phyto-sanitary barriers.

## **Title VII – Research**

To compete successfully in the global economy we need to increase our investment in agricultural research. The USDA Agriculture Research Service

and our Land Grant Universities have faced flat or decreasing budgets for years. We support increasing agricultural research budgets in the next farm bill.

## **Title IX – Energy**

**Energy Conservation Program-** We fully support programs in the next farm bill to enhance the development of biobased fuels. We are investigating the fit pulse crops will have in the ethanol production market. Farm Bill policy should not just consider energy products. Rewards for energy conservation should also be included. Legume crops like dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas do not require fertilizer because they fix their own nitrogen in the soil. If the farm bill rewards farmers for planting “energy crops”, then it should also reward them for planting crops that conserve energy.

## **Title X – Miscellaneous**

**Transportation-** Cost effective and adequate transportation of our crops to market has emerged as one of our biggest limiting factors during the growth of our industry in the past few years. Most of the pulse processors in our industry are captive shippers on a short line railroad. They provide rural jobs in places like Ray, North Dakota and Chinook, Montana. Competitive rail rates and adequate service is critical to the long-term health of our industry. The BNSF railroad services a large pea and lentil processing facility in the small town of Ray, North Dakota that is about 100 miles from the Canadian border. To ship a box car from Ray to the west coast costs \$3,463. The same boxcar on the Canadian Pacific Railroad to the west coast carrying Canadian pulses costs \$2,463. It is currently \$1,000 cheaper per car to ship Canadian pulses to either west or east ports. Our industry supports the captive rail legislation sponsored by Senator Burns, Dorgan and others. We ask Congress to address the issue of transportation by both rail and water in the next farm bill.

## **Summary**

I would like to thank you for allowing the USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council to provide this testimony and for coming to the great state of Montana. Part of my extended testimony is a printed power point presentation with information about our industry and our farm bill policy positions.

I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

James Evans, Chairman  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
Genessee, ID



James Evans, Chair of the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Council, was born in the quiet little town of Genessee, Idaho in 1956. By the time he graduated from High School in 1975, he had already become a partner with his dad, Sanford, in the family farming operation. He attended Spokane Community College, then the University of Idaho but claims to have completed his education at “Rim Rock University” when he came to the farm to stay in 1976. In 1989, Jim married his wife, Diane Ronnenberg, at Priest Lake, Idaho and they have managed the family farmstead ever since.

Jim’s great grandfather established his farm, now a century farm, in 1878. The farm is located in the Palouse Region of Idaho on the breaks of the Clearwater River, one of the most productive regions of the nation. Primarily a wheat farm, Jim’s dad, Sanford, first incorporated legumes into the farm rotation in the early 1930’s. Later, Sanford helped to establish the Idaho Dry Pea and Lentil Commission and served as chair in 1965. The farm now produces winter and spring wheat, barley, dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas.

His farm is the site for research projects for the University of Idaho and the USDA-ARS Pulse Research Trials. His service on the USADPLC Research Committee and the Pulse Variety Selection Committee for many years exemplifies his support for research and variety improvement. Not only has he supported research, but his advice and leadership has been critical to the industry. He has served as a board member of the USADPLC for the past 10 years in some capacity and currently serves as the Chair, Idaho Dry Pea and Lentil Commission along with Chair of the USADPLC.

In addition, Jim has been able to provide leadership to his community at the local, state and national levels in the following positions and organizations:

- Nez Perce Planning and Zoning Board;
- President of the Nez Perce County Grain Producers;
- Chairman of the North Idaho Seed Association;
- Chairman of the Idaho Pea & Lentil Growers;
- Chairman of the Idaho Dry Pea & Lentil Commission; and
- Chairman of the USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council.

When Jim is not farming or serving his community, he enjoys flying, fishing, and spending time with his wife.

Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Required Witness Disclosure Form

House Rules\* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of Federal grants received since October 1, 2004.

Name: Mr. Jim Evans  
Chairman, USADPLC  
Address: 15432 Evans Road  
Genesee, ID 83832  
Telephone: phone: 208-885-1387

Organization you represent (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

USA DRY PEA & LENTIL COUNCIL

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2004, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do NOT require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:

Source: NONE Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2004, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

Source: FY 2005 - MAP, FMD, EMP GRANTS Amount: \$998,000

Source: FY 2006 - MAP, FMD, EMP GRANTS Amount: \$1.2 million

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*\* Rule X1, clause 2(g)(4) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness.*

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.